FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

"For a world united in prayer"

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The purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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EDITORIAL

LONELINESS - I

MORE THAN ONCE in her celebrated diaries the late Anais Nin speaks of the possibility of a man or a woman's literally dying of loneliness in this society of ours. I doubt if any of us can imagine a worse fate, for our ideal is popularity and being hail fellows well met and the happy interplay of rugged individualists, each of no superior or certainly no inferior worth to the other. Popularity is very important to us, and if we don't happen to be as hail as we'd like to be or as rugged, we are inclined to conceal the mortifying fact under a variety of guises of which the purpose is to fool not only others but ourselves. By such a process, intricate in a way that only human nature can make it, we not only compound our inadequacies with feelings of shame and guilt but also--more disastrously--proceed to fortify ourselves inside our loneliness, thus in our anxiety to make it seem impregnable managing really to assure its being total. In these privately-built castles of our selves we do not (unless we can help it) ever refer to the terrors we feel while inhabiting them, nor to the icy wind of complete isolation that surrounds us. Instead of admitting such truths, we erect additional barricades and defenses, dig wider and deeper moats, hoist brighter flags of defiance, and regard ourselves as the champions of sacred things: our integrity, say, or duty, or the right or the truth or the intelligent or the good. The unutterable separation in which we live we are thus able to see as the price of something proportionately important and worth it.

Since it is out of the anguish of one kind or another of such loneliness that we begin looking beyond ourselves to ask of something or some power for help--since, in other words, pain is the source of all the growth we achieve--we must expect pain. Indeed, if it didn't hurt so much and weren't potentially so dangerous to us, it really seems as if we ought to go in quest of it. We cannot do that, however. All we are capable of is to endure what pain we receive and to take such consolation as we can find in the understanding that it is from these sufferings that we will start to grow if we can and arrive at such participation in things spiritual as we have the abilities for.

Since it is loneliness that brings us into touch with a power higher than ourselves at last, and since it is this very loneliness that we lose,

PHOTO BY TOM DUNHAM

the loss of it being one of the clearest signs and greatest benefits of our growth, the sources of our loneliness seem well worth an investigation.

"Alone we come into the world," the old saying says, "and alone we go out of it." The notion of there being a trauma connected with our birth is familiar to us: our explusion from that perfect amniotic garden in which we were created seems cause enough for us to suffer discomfort and loneliness for the rest of our born days. Insofar as we can tell, our exit from this world appears to be an equally lonely procedure. The famous painting by Gauguin bears the title (according to memory) of "Where Do We Come From? Why Are We Here? Whither Do We Go?" To some, the unanswerability of these universal questions is the chief reason for the universal loneliness.

Others regard loneliness as the inevitable concommittant of the of the complexity of which we humans consist at this stage of our evolution. Perhaps so.

My own experience of loneliness, though, began long before complexity set in. My memory is that I was around six or seven years old. My mother took me to a matinee of the movie made of Admiral Byrd's exploration of the South Pole. All I am now able to recall of the movie, is an episode in which one of the sled-dogs fell sick, was unable to keep pace with the team, was therefore cut loose from the team and allowed to follow as well as it could across the Antarctic waste. It couldn't. So a member of the expedition was sent back to shoot it. I can still hear that shot. . . . The lonely death of that poor husky was something I identified with entirely. At that time, I had my mother to console me. Later, when I was endeavoring to cope with worse loneliness by far, I found no alleviation of my pain until--giving up, I dropped to my knees and uttered the single word: "Help!" --P.G.

• • •

RITUAL

William Walter De Bolt

When a new year comes
hopes burns again like a fire
until a newscast.

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS by Reuben L. Musey

A DEEPER SPIRIT OF FELLOWSHIP AMONG MANKIND

ANOTHER YEAR--the twenty-ninth--has begun for Fellowship in Prayer.

The past two decades plus seven years remind us all that we have had "a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind." And so, we hope, it continues in the days ahead.

Last year on this page I presented some insights into world religions. The series will be continued in future issues.

The task of bringing the Fellowship to more people in the United States and throughout the world may seem an exceedingly difficult and complicated one, yet it is basically a simple one---that of communicating our purpose by means of our words and life. To "communicate" means to make sure that a message is both given and received with understanding. For this, word and life are both necessary---the word to proclaim and interpret the purpose of the Fellowship, the life to illustrate and corroborate the word. Without the life, the word is unconvincing. Without the word, the life is silent and meaningless.

The cover of each issue of this publication carries the motto of "For a world united in prayer" as well as a reproduction of Durer's praying hands. Above the table of contents is the Purpose of Fellowship in Prayer as set down by the founder, Carl Allison Evans. Our purpose is, quite simply, to reach everyone: ". . . all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God."

The seeds sown within the pages of the publication are bearing fruit. We have made known to people in every state of the union and in thirty-some countries abroad the purpose of our organization. The Fellowship was founded after World War II when two factors played an important part in bringing it into being, one practical and one doctrinal. On the practical side was the urge to help people in war-torn countries and to attempt to bring about peace through understanding among people via the practice of prayer. The doctrinal reason was a concern for the ecumenical movement--to achieve unity among the religions of the world.

My motto for 1978 is: "Chosen to Reach Out!"

Reuben L. Musey

PRAYER PEOPLE

Pollyanna Sedziol

WHEN I was a student nurse, the hospital where I trained had on the wall of each patient room a sign which read, "Prayer changes things." I believed it then, and do now, but have never been able to give the kind of testimony to life-change which the charismatics among us define as proof of prayer's effectiveness. My recognitions are always those of hindsight, and my prayer life is probably equateable with the quiet struggling of empathetic persons, whatever their race or creed, to whom God does not speak, yet is. It comes as a natural response to daily life, present through a grace beyond my understanding even when I am at odds with myself and with life.

A patient in the emergency room where I work recently said to me, "I know you, you're Mrs V." I told him no, but thanked him for what I considered a real compliment, for I know Mrs V. slightly--enough to know that she is one of that company whom I refer to in my heart as "prayer people," whose daily lives reflect compassion and willingness rather than complaint and self-interest. Since we bear little physical resemblance to one another, I felt that the patient was experiencing in my care the kind of nursing she gives.

Our church has what we call a "prayer chain." Persons feeling special need for prayer support can call one of the chain leaders, and thus trigger a series of phone-calls that pass on the basic details of their requests. Over the years that the chain has been functioning, we have never gotten together as a group for any institutional activities---fellowship, instruction, debate, or whatever. Instead, we each receive the word, pass it along by phone, and then incorporate the request into our individual forms of prayer life. Looking at it superficially, one could make a list of the "yes" answers (my nephew came through surgery without incident) and the "no" answers (my friend Vicki died of that ugly cancer) . . .but I feel that, whatever the outcome of the particular situation, the prayer support provided undoubtedly brings grace to those who need it as well as to us in the prayer foundation.

Whether I would write and speak and live the Christian tenet if I had been born in another religious community cannot be known, but ob-

serving the differences between my concept of Christianity and that of so many with whom I live and work and worship, I feel that the heart of it has been probed by only a few---the saints, the martyrs, the Mrs V.'s, and that the daily claims of Christ which would, could, should, and sometimes do make life different, lie fallow still, undiscovered, unprobed, unproved, because of our very human ability to rationalize anything and everything to fit that which makes us comfortable.

So we see still, two thousand years after the advent of "God with us," the continuing proliferation of "this way" and "that way" indicators constructed on someone's God-moment, someone's ray of light---all of which have spiritual claims and attractions, but which fall short for too many folks when the confusions of human inter-relatedness dilute and distort our individual moments of grace. This is the basic reason prayer as a daily, hourly life-style is as needed for spiritual life and growth as the air sustaining our physical being.

Prayer does not always, in my experience, give the unqualified gift, whatever that desire may be. Prayer costs the involvement of the pray-er. Several months ago one of our doctors requested, jesting, I assumed, that I pray for him. I replied in tones which I thought matched his, that it "wouldn't help." I had in mind many prayer experiences when no light, no warmth, no answers had come. But that brief dialogue has returned to haunt me often as I wonder if perhaps he heard my reply as meaning "you're beyond help." Most of my days of darkness and desperation are occasioned by the feeling that God is no longer available to me, through me, for me. It grieves me that, having declared my faith in every way I know to do, having tried, and failed, and tried again to live it in all daily encounters, I should have such days and hours of emptiness. . . yet I have also thought on the better days that follow these, that perhaps in the sustaining of my human self and life through these times, God has indeed been nearer than in my times of peace and joy. I do not know. I do know that it is in the depths of these despairs and in the days of settling dust and ashes directly following that I am most acutely aware of and most fully in prayer for the needs of those I know and love, and the tragedies of the world which fill the daily headlines.

The crowd thronging about the miracle-worker and social dissident known as Jesus had for him the same basic question which haunts people in all ages: "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?"

"This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he sent" (John 6: 28, 29).

This answer, brief and simplistic when viewed against history and today's headlines, could be said to have meant absolutely nothing. But the tendency of the world to trample the salt underfoot, to douse the light, and to ignore the leaven only serves to increase their value to the social order in which the believer faithfully takes up the daily cross.

For me, a non-charismatic ordinary harried woman who walks the brink of emotional instability yet yearns to be faithful and fruitful in service and love, the key word is "believe." Years ago, when I taught third and fourth grade children in Sunday School, I broke that word into its roots and suggested to my students that they would always be known by their lives. Live by. Believe.

The "prayer people" of our world, the ordinary persons keeping each faith with the life given, having said "yes" to the creating and sustaining life, are sustained by prayer: prayer both entered into ostensibly, and prayer present even as we are preoccupied with the routines of dailyness. Our fellowship is precious, however unknown we may be one to another.

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CAN'T THEY SEE?

Margaret I. Mahaffy

Can't they see that I'm as young as I used to be?
What are they trying to make of me?
The love of life within me still
Overflows enough to fill
The joy of beginning each new day.
What matter your age or what they say?
There's much to be done along the way,
New doors to open, wide vistas to see.
All of this, through Eternity.

"Increasingly, what passes for education. . . is planned amnesia"

THE LOLLIPOPPING OF THE WEST

George Steiner

IN "The Second Coming," Yeats asked, "And what rough beast, its hour come round at last, / Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?" What he had in mind, prophetically, was world war, the apocalyptic turn in the great wheel of history, the blood-dimmed tide of revolutionary despair and social misery breaking across the seeming stability of

the industrial West. But even Yeats, with his weakness for ectoplasm, table-rapping, and theosophy, could not have anticipated the menagerie that has come slouching and mincing out of twentieth-century unreason.

There are three times as many registered astrologers in Europe and the United States as there are chemists and physicists. Charlatans, either giggly or sinister, peddle millions of copies of books about visitants from outer space who, in some Edenic past, left their occult spoors on the deserts of Peru or stone circles of Carnac and Glastonbury.

Star-trekkers and galactic warriors drug the imagination. Frightened of future wars and famines, dizzied by models of scientific and technological futurity whose complication it cannot grasp, a bone-tired human species is looking towards saucers in the sky for solace and surveillance.

Where the West does not peer at the stars, it looks to Asia. Or, rather, to the *kitsch* of Asia.

The children of Krishna tango along our soiled pavements. The stoned, their vacant minds hysterical or supine, mouth dime-store mantras. The mendacities of Zen and fairground meditation, pre-packaged nirvanas *a la* Hermann Hesse (an immensely overrated writer), are big business. Neon tantras flash from the boulevards of San Francisco and Chelsea. Cadillac-wafted little tricksters, corrupt butterballs in saffron robes who proclaim themselves to be the light from the East, fill our lecture halls and take their tithes.

Narcotics and horoscopes, little men with pointed ears and margarine gurus, the pitiful bullying of encounter groups and the trek to Katmandu, the orgone box, and the nauseous million-dollar industry of Satanism in movies, on television, and in magazines---all breathe and feed upon the same hunger, the same solitudes, the same bewilderments.

Two world wars and totalitarian massacres, the spiral of economic crises, the sudden penitential masochism of Western man in front of Afro-Asian and Amerindian communities that he has exploited or ignored, have done their work. We are the dropouts of reason. We ache for lullabies or transcendence.

Moreover, the classical ripostes of our inherited civilization have, very largely, failed us. The current debate over the value of the humanities, and over the ethics of advanced science and technology,

is often shallow and confused. But the issue is a real one. High European culture in arts and letters proved absolutely no barrier against political inhumanity. The question as to whether certain lines of scientific inquiry should be pursued at any economic price (high-energy physics), and at any social risk (recombinant DNA and genetic cloning) is a genuine dilemma.

The claim that the modern arts have completely rejected common human needs and understanding is silly. But there *is* something to the widespread sentiment that ordinary men and women, in their daily existence, can no longer draw from the great springs of the imagination the strengths, the delights, the bracing hopes, they once did.

Paintings are opaque scrawls; sculptures seem to be lumps of ugly matter; music banishes melody. Modern writing is so often autistic, technically demanding, defensive (the schism between poet and public, which dates back to Baudelaire and Mallarme, has not been healed).

At the very same time, the skills of literacy, the shared body of recognition and reference, which are essential if one is to harvest warmth and richness from the art and literature of the past, are vanishing. The simplest mythological, Biblical, historical allusion is riddling. Increasingly, what passes for education, particularly in the land of "affirmative action" and egalitarian dreams, is planned amnesia.

Philosophy, too, has rather left us in the lurch. Whether or not the achievements of formal, linguistic investigation since Gottlob and Ludwig Wittgenstein are as illuminating as logicians and Anglo-American positivists would have it, remains a moot point. As in transformational generative linguistics or "semiotics," now so desperately fashionable, the results are often of spurious profundity and the jargon that surrounds them is corrupting.

What is clear is this: Philosophy, in the current Anglo-American vein, has largely relinquished---indeed it has scorned---those central areas of metaphysics, of ethics, of esthetics, of political thought, that constituted the mainstream and splendor of the philosophic tradition. It has left reality, the obstinate, messy sovereignity of the everyday world, to witch doctors on the one hand, and to intellectual terrorists on the other. What it offers instead is dry tack for teeth on edge.

Hence the striking renaissance of *theological* thought and argu-

ment. In terms of sheer force of insight, of adultness, of the gravity that honors the reader by taking his mental and moral capacities seriously, there is not much in recent philosophy or literature to match, let alone excel, the works of Rudolf Bultmann, of Karl Barth, of Karl Rahner, of Hans Kung (whose "To Be a Christian" is, just now, the most widely discussed book in Europe).

Eberhard Bethge's biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer is one of the few assured classics of our age, inexhaustible and uncompromising as a classic must be in its reading of the reader.

So much of what intuition now compels us to recognize as indispensable, and compels us to revert to even in disagreement, draws its powers from sources implicitly or explicitly theological. I am thinking of the writings of Martin Heidigger, of the poetry of Paul Celan, of the works of Boris Pasternak, Aleksander I. Solzhenitsyn and Andrei D. Sinyavski (and what has our Anglo-American literary-academic circus to set beside them?). I am thinking of the poetry of Thomas Hardy, the only very great English poet of the century.

It would be foolish to predict a religious revival in any formal and dogmatic sense (though there are significant pointers in just that direction in both the Jewish and Christian worlds.) It is too soon to tell. But the hunger is obvious, and what it has been given to feed upon is often dangerous trash.

In a deliberate echo and footnote to Yeats's apocalyptic vision, the English poet Philip Larkin asks: ' 'And what remains when disbelief has gone?'' The answer may be neither as obvious nor as bleak as it looked only a decade ago.

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I SHALL COME *by Joy Bergman*

We are here we are here in the whispering wind
On the top of the leaves Sunlit

I shall come I shall come In the light which is unmuted
In the beautiful day of the Sun

I shall come to him who believes
I shall come I shall come.

FOOLISHNESS

Max Memm

It is written that
the Lord preserves the simple,
the foolish He does not abandon,
the meek do inherit His earth,
and unto His realm
come little children.

If God does not abandon
the simple and the foolish,
the meek and the young,
does He therefore abandon us?
For we are intricate and wise,
proud and grown-up.

God never abandons us:
we abandon Him.
For we believeourselves
intricate as He is intricate,
wise as He is wise,
proud as He is proud
and grown-up as He is grown-up.
And we know that
God is not intricate in our
intricacy,
not wise in our wisdom,
not proud in our pride,
not grown-up in our maturity.

And so we believe ourselves
the brothers of God
or the heirs of God
and as such the teachers of
the young and simple,
the foolish and the meek.

But God is not complex:
He is the Everpresent.
He is not wise:
He is the unknowable.
He is not old:
He is the Eternal.
He is not proud:
He is Love.

And we, believing that
we are wise and mature,
and not knowing that
we are children and fools,
cast God out of our beings
and install a self-image.
Hence we are left empty,
looking at our selves
and listening to our selves.
And our secret places are filled
with the deadness of
self-content
or the agitation of misery.

Oh God, deliver us
from self-content into misery,
and then guide us toward
foolishness.
Come, let us be fools before God
and before one another.

SANCTUARY

Edna Margaret Long

Our garden is a tabernacle
where pine trees
in green vestments
murmur canticles
while scarlet tanagers
and black-capped chickadees,
in their birch-tree choir-lofts,
chant litanies.

I COULD NEVER DO IT WITHOUT YOU

Marilyn Schwartz Laurelle

I got it in double doses today
Lord
The world piled a heavy
weight on my heart
I went to church to
pray, I sought
your psalms
and read into
them, deep
Then Lord, I was
bombarded,
a double dose
of problems and worries
Lord, how did I know, as I
write now, through
mysorrow
That you would fortify
my spirit
Keeping my emotions in
check for my
first blow,
Holding on to your word
for the second blow.
I feel recovery on the
way, Lord
I could never do it
without you.

THE SENTIMENTAL CHAIR

Hettie McGee Barker

IT WAS an ugly chair, a ladder-back painted with bright green enamel and pushed back into an extra bedroom. A pillow covered the patched wooden seat.

This hidden chair belonged to a friend of mine. One day as I was visiting with her, she pointed it out and with a wistful look said, "The only reason I'm keeping it is because it belonged to my grandmother. I just can't bring myself to part with it."

Sometime after that I went to visit a couple I hadn't seen for some time and took my friend with me. The husband where we visited had taken up finishing chairs as a hobby. He showed us some of his beautiful work. The before-and-after pictures of these antique chairs and rockers were unbelievable.

My friend told the husband about her ugly, but sentimental chair. He surprised her by offering to refinish it for just the cost of the materials. Well, my friend immediately informed him, it wasn't worth doing anything with---she kept it only for personal reasons.

Not long after that, my friend and I hauled the chair to this good-hearted man.

In about two weeks, I received a call to pick up the finished chair. With my anxious friend, I drove to his home. Going into the basement, we looked around for the once-green ladder-back. There must have been a half-dozen finished chairs arranged there.

My friend looked at the man and asked, "But where is my chair?

With a beaming smile he answered, "You're looking at it!"

We all stared at the smooth natural-finished wood and perfect cane-woven seat. Everyone began talking at once.

"That's your chair!" the man repeated several times.

My friend finally believed him. The look that shone on her face was like the dawn of a new day.

As I watched this scene, I thought: just as this kind man was interested in restoring antiques, our Master enjoys renewing our lives and bringing out the best in us.

MEDITATION HOUR

Emma S. McLaughlin

"Be still my child and know."
But in the eye of stillness
there is motion,
twisting, writhing,
groping after light.

In darkness wheels revolve,
circular rainbows,
throwing a show of sparks
in all directions ----
and distant sounds intrude:
a screaming siren, a singing bird,
a chiming clock.

"Be still my child and know."
But a restless swallow tenants
in my breast ---- dipping, skimming,
darting, gliding --- perpetual motion.

I am an urn,
fill me, fill me, fill me.
Fill me with Your bounteous wisdom,
Your comforting presence,
Your everlasting love.

As if in answer to the silent plea
light shatters darkness,
pulsating glory
filling my small vessel,
leaking in golden streams from porous clay.

And yet the voice still speaks.
"Be still and know."
What, Lord? What shall I know?
That light bestowed can never be
contained?

SKATEBOARDS

Neil C. Fitzgerald

LAST LABOR DAY WEEKEND the young girl next door knocked on our back door with an unusual sense of urgency. She asked for some ice. Her college-bound brother had taken a whirl on one of the children's skateboards and fallen on his arm. The ice helped the swelling, but a trip to the emergency-room revealed the arm was broken. Thus a few moments of lost balance stretched into many weeks of lingering discomfort.

Of course we all have these moments of lost balance in our lives that are followed by periods of regret. Yet many times they are really blessings, for God needs from time to time to jolt us, to awaken us to who we are and where we are going. All too often in sailing through the days and weeks of the year our prayers have become merely mechanical, our self-interests have deafened us to family and friends,and our intimate sharing with God has practically ceased.

We need to pull up short, to find that time each day to reflect with God on the life we live. The times and places for contemplation and prayer will vary with the times and circumstances of any particular day.

For many of us our church first comes to mind. Bathed in the warmth of morning sunlight, we are easily at peace here. We can be thankful for our blessings and seek God's direction.

On other days, the quietness of our room, with soft music playing, affords us precious moments to read and meditate.

The outdoors can certainly bring us very close to God, for all around us is His creation. To walk a long stretch of ocean beach with shore birds for companions can uplift the spirit in great dimensions.

We might sit by a quiet pond surrounded by woodlands of oak and maple and birch. There, as we listen to a chorus of songbirds, we realize these are God's gifts and He wills so much more for us if we but open our hearts to Him each day.

Everyday affairs and cares demand their time, and rightly so, but more importantly so does God. The next time we see a child gliding along on a skateboard, let it be a reminder to us. Have we checked in with God today?

PHOTO BY CARL G. KARSCH

THE GREAT HORNED OWL AND THE DRIED GRASS

Eleanor Ebersole

"WHAT IS THIS WHITE?" thought the great horned owl. "What is this white creeping down the mountain and out over the river?"

"Things are not right," thought the owl. "Something I do not know is happening. Since my birth I have not seen everything so white."

The owl sat on the forked branch of the oak, looking about: wondering, wishing to know what he did not know.

Below, a cottontail rabbit dashed from cover for a moment, then backed out of sight. The owl did not move.

Out over all the owl could see the world was white and still.

"What? How?" pondered the owl. "Is it meant? Will what has come, go? How could an owl know?"

Of all that its wide eyes could see, by day or by night, nothing gave an answer except, perhaps, the tall grass.

In the frozen field, where the wind had been fiercely blowing, clung the dried summer grass above the white, indomitable as the owl itself.

"The grass knows as much as anything," thought the owl.

"Whoo," softly spoke the owl to the grass. "Whoo!"

The grass neither rustled nor spoke.

"What it knows, I must surely know," thought the owl. "Whoo!"

The rabbit came out, and disappeared.

Since the grass knew something,the owl was sure it knew the rest. As long as the white world lasted, the owl was certain it knew at least that.

ROAD OF LIFE

Josepha Murray Emms

I fear to walk the road, Lord---
Way down the lonely hill,
For shadows lie in waiting. . .
So phantom-like and still.

Weird shapes and sounds may frighten
And make me pause to see
If darkness hides a figure
Or wind sweeps through a tree.

If you will walk with me, Lord,
My heart will know no care,
For pathways hold no terror
When You are walking there.

CRY OF CONTRITION

Laurence E. Estes

Stir me, stir me, cut me to the quick--
Trim me, trim me like a burning wick. . .
Mold me, mold me like a pat of clay;
Melt me, melt me, help me to pray.

Lead me, lead me on the path of prayer,
Place me, place me always in your care.

Guard me, guard me when days grow dark,
Hold me, hold me fan each spark.

Draw me, draw me toward the good,
Keep me, keep me out of the wood.

Show me, show me what I should know
Teach me, teach me spiritually to grow!

A whole dare yields a whole faith

PASS IT ON

Nixeon Civille Handy

THERE HAVE BEEN TIMES in my life when the help I needed flowed around me and lifted me onto an island above my difficulties in an amazing way, and, looking back, I have no recollection of any conscious call for help.

During the summer of 1946 I was invited to California to do some demonstration teaching for the Released Time Religious Program: I had established sessions for five hundred children in churches near various elementary schools. Bakersfield hosted a large number of us in a beautiful church, and the week's conference moved well until the meeting on the last night. I began to feel sick and managed to leave without making a disturbance, but I quickly became very very ill, with a great pain under my left shoulder-blade. I had to be carried to the car and taken to the home of my host. When the doctor came, he immediately put me to sleep with a shot. Next day the pain was still there and stayed with me for days afterwards.

I called my husband, and he came down and put me in the back of the car and drove me home to Visalia. Our doctor took care of me, but could find no reason for my illness. The pain moved from my back to my head. When it finally went away, I was still miserable and very weak.

My husband was directing the YMCA camp at Lake Tulequoia, and urged me to come up there with him. He was sure I would feel better soon and that the children would enjoy it too. So we went, and the first night I was there I broke out with strange large bumps on both legs, rather like boils and most painful. And our younger child became feverish with a sore throat. We felt that by morning things would improve, but we saw the child was definitely coming down with something. And when I called the doctor about my legs, he said he could now diagnose my illness as Valley Fever.

"What can I do?" I asked him.

"Nothing. There isn't any treatment for it."

"Will I get well?"

"Some do, and some don't. If you do recover, be assured you won't ever have it again."

"What causes it?"

"We are not certain, but believe it is virus in the soil. The soldiers encamped at Bakersfield during the war had it."

The disease, I learned, settles in a weakness in an organ, often the lungs. Since I had a tendency toward neuritis, it caught me there. The doctor's advice was to go home nnd bring David---the sick child---and he would have a look at him.

I can't believe I drove home that day in the heat of the valley---miles and miles of suffering the way I was with my legs and David sick and the other children, Bill and Lorena, in the car. Nor can I believe I carried that five-year-old boy in my arms across the street and all the way down the block to the doctor's office. But I did. And, yes, it was scarlet-fever, and we had exposed a hundred boys in camp to it. We were promptly quarantined. Fortunately, no other cases developed.

When my husband visited, we talked through the window. I was barely able to crawl. My oldest boy Bill had a serious ear-infection. The doctor explained the crisis in scarlet-fever. He said I would know, so I waited. What could I do but pray?

The phone-call

Then we had the phone-call. Mrs Nelson wanted to know how we were and what she could do. I told her: nothing---we were quarantined.

"What's the hardest thing for you to do?" she asked.

"Tostand up."

"Then, you can't cook?"

"Well, hardly," I said.

"I'll call you back."

"God bless!"

Later, she phoned to ask what time we generally ate our meals. I told her about twelve and six. Then she offered us the most wonderful gift a family ever received. "Beginning tonight at six and tomorrow at

twelve," she said, "your meals will be delivered by the church women to your side porch." Can you imagine what this meant to us? I cried all the way back to bed. "Mommy, you should be laughing!" the children said. They were clapping their hands and jumping up and down and running to tell David in bed. And I hadn't asked for even one loaf.

That made our days. Every day for two weeks the children watched and wondered what treats we would be having. We talked through the window with many good friends, saw their smiles for us and their prayers. What else is it all about?

David's scarlet-fever crisis came in the night. He awoke crying and vomiting, breaking the fever. I cried again, but happy tears now because I knew he was on the mend.

The meals were delicious. When the quarantine was lifted, believe me we missed that heavenly cafeteria service, for though my legs were healed I was stillconfined to bed. One of my most difficult times came from a pain in my right arm. It would not turn off, and it was not the kind of pain I could stand up to. I walked all night. The doctor said: no, stay in bed. He gave me painkillers, but my body rejected them, so I took the pain raw. I worked on it until the pain over there in my right arm was there but I was over here with Him. The pain finally wore itself out, but it was a long time before I could use the arm. I learned to eat and brush my teeth with the left one.

Getting well

About that time, my writing-brother came to visit. He told me: write. I had always wanted to, but somehow put it off. He fixed a small typewriter over the bed, bought me a copy of *Writer's* Magazine, and said he would read whatever I produced. The first fiction was poor, but my poems placed right away---fourteen of them in all.

How did we manage? I was in bed for a year, with three lively youngsters, and my husband's work for the "Y" took him all over the country. We found a woman to come in to clean once a week. Someone else to iron. The Lord provided for us in all ways. What wonderful friends. . . .

Blest things continued to happen. A family brought us Thanksgiving dinner, turkey and all the fixings. I can still taste the pumpkin pie.

I said: ''What can we do to return all this wonderful love?''

"Pass it on," they said.

During the Depression this family had often been hungry and had made up their minds always to share whenever they were able to do so. Wasn't that beautiful?

"Pass it on." If we spend the rest of our lives sharing, we'll never catch up on that one year.

The doctor was a big help. He asked me what I could do with my mind. I told him I had started to write. "Good," he said. I also told him about my religious school project, and he urged me to continue to supervise, to arrange for the teachers to come to my house for meetings. I chaired from my bed.

So the year wore on. I grew some stronger, but still was not well. Grandma Handy came to cook and clean and tend the family, and so did my husband's brother and wife. O, the blessings.

When Easter was coming, I asked the doctor if I could try going to church. He said I could, but to be prepared for a reaction. "You' ll be as sick afterwards as you have been."

"It will be the hardest thing you ever did," he added.

I realized I was going to have to hoist all flags and make every personal effort. I began to plan a new dress to wear. I had a piece of lavender sheer wool, and we found a dressmaker, and friends brought artificial violets to pin on it, and matched gloves for me. It was to be my Stepping-Out Day!

By Easter I had built up my hopes of being able to pull it off. We drove to church in the morning, and so far all was fine. But when we got out of the car and began to walk to the door, all the people came at me. I was terrified---I, the extravert, the one who had spoken to countless audiences, who taught school. I grabbed Larry's arm and whispered, "Don't stop! I'll be lost if you do!''

I posted a smile at the people. They were rejoicing to see me out of bed. We kept going and made it to our pew. Larry told me later that I did not relax my grip on his arm until the sermon began.

Was I sick as a result? Was I ever!

But the spark within me kept wanting to try again and again, and I did. I would struggle out of bed and into the lavender dress---it got to be a kind of symbol of getting-out---and sit in the living-room or walk

to the corner on Larry's arm or go for a short ride. Gradually I managed to walk all the way around the block. That was a triumph. I recall it clearly. But I was moving in cold molasses compared to my former quick way.

Then my husband was interviewed for the executive position in the Y in Wenatchee. He sent me a telegram saying he liked the men there very much. I knew we were going to move. I was concerned about it, but he wrote to me: "You just leave it all to the Lord and Larry." And somehow it worked out.

But that's not the end.

I still wasn't strong. I still moved in cold molasses. But the Lord continued to bless me. Again he sent me something I didn't ask for. I became pregnant for the fourth time. We all worried about what would happen. I spent a great deal of time in bed, and all the family helped.

And the instant the child was born, I knew I was well.

I began to yell, "I'm well, I'm well!"

My husband tried to shush me, but I would not be quieted. I was in the middle of a gloriously beautiful miracle and enjoying it. I had been so ill for so long.

When I questioned my doctor about it, this was his answer: "No, you won't find it in the medical journals. But it happens. We see it happening all the time, the unexpected healing. We do all we can, and then ---the miracle!"

HOW MUCH DARE CAN YOU HOLD?

What are you after --
a mini-faith or total trust?
Whole dare yields whole faith,
a lifting up out of the crowd.
If you search for beauty,
do not be surprised to wake
up beautiful. Give memory
nothing but joy. Do not let
time go by in the dark.
Illumine the common and your
life will spangle.

YOUTH PRAYS

Emily Sargent Councilman

FATHER GOD: I thank you for letting me come to you with my feelings and thoughts and needs. I'm glad you already know what's going on inside me, and I don't have to pray words to you for *your* sake--only for mine. I need to be in touch, to feel that I can touch you in some way.

I guess I'm asking you to help me see myself the way I think you see me--feeling with me my awkwardness when I'm self-conscious; my helplessness when I feel the pain and sadness in the world, in myself; my confusion with all the answers that have not seemed to work; and my own guilt when I fall down, and yet accepting me as I am, loving me as your child who is becoming. . . .

I want to use my body and mind, my talents, even my feelings to help make this world a better place for all people. When I see what has been allowed to happen to people and to this beautiful earth, I feel mad, and sick, and helpless. Father, will you help me own my feelings and take responsibility for my attitudes, my actions? Help me own my helplessness, remembering that even Jesus said he could do nothing without the Father in him.

I know I want to help people who need help, but I'm not sure this desire is a completely honest one for me, yet. I want to recognize my desires for what they *are* and let you show me where they, as well as my attitudes toward plans and achievements, fall short of my becoming who I am.

I'd like to be able to pray, "God, help me help all people who need help," but I know, whatever the words, it won't work if I'm really asking, "Let *me* be the one to help," rather than, "Father, let me be one with all your creation's children, learning to fill my place in the whole, Christ in us making a better world."

OUR FATHER: I know I honestly want to see where I need changing and to let you help me change. . . in becoming myself. Let this honest desire be my gift to you now. And help me keep in touch throughout this day so that what I do with my body and mind will speak my truth quietly as I plan and work and play with others, respecting my elders and loving my youth

(each age with its limits and opportunities) and, aware of you within me, touching all my world with what I am becoming.

In the name of your strong son, Jesus Christ, I pray. Amen.

THE JOURNEY

Frances Brandon Neighbours

The road
leading from Love
to Hate,
to Indifference,
is a far journey
with many detours
marked Pity.

Would it not be better
to turn
and walk back
to Love?

TIME'S FRUIT

Conrad Pendleton

Today
used to the core
stales
in Time's wastecan.

But tomorrow
will redden
whole as a pippin
for Time's fruitpan.

THE SYMBOL OF THE LOTUS

Ruth Reyna

THERE IS a medieval hymn composed by an anonymous Hindu poet in which a devotee, asked by God to choose a reward for his good acts, makes an unusual request. "Oh, Lord," he says, "I have no craving for fame or riches. I do not ask for a kingdom, nor do I seek great powers. If you are truly pleased with me, grant only this—that in my next life I shall be born a flower."

To be reborn as a flower—to live among the quiet, cool leaves of a tender shrub in a placid pool, reaching upward to meet the warm, caressing rays of the life-giving sun in the blue, blue sky—to drop one's petals on the warm Mother Earth and to scatter color and scent throughout the world; and, at the end of life's brief span to find one's place on the altar of the Divine or in a maiden's hair or in the loving hand of a friend—only an oriental mind could have thought of such a boon.

In India every flower is tinged with sanctity. Lowly wild-flowers growing along the road are plucked as often to take to the temple as an offering as the rose or the kadamb. Indian ladies decorate their hair with honeysuckle blossoms, while it is not deemed unmanly for a man to offer another a flower to show his esteem and friendship. Pretentious garlands of sweet-scented flowers are made up and placed around the neck of an honored visitor.

But the best-loved and most sacred of the flowers in the East is the lotus or *padma*. The lotus rising from the depths of the primeval waters represents the self-engendering power of the evolutionary abyss. It is the principle of grandeur and sublimity and is both Being and Becoming. The shining lotus is an emanation from the world-womb of the Creator's cosmic sleep.

The Buddhist legend goes: Brahma, the highest creative being looking down upon Lord Buddha, the Awakened One, implored the Buddha to become the teacher of mankind, the teacher of gods, the teacher of the created world, all of which were en-

wrapped in the womb of sleep (ignorance). But there were some, the god urged, who might be willing to awaken to the truth. As lotus flowers arising from the dark waters of a lake are to be found in various stages of maturity—some nearing the surface, some already open prepared to drink the rays of the sun—just so, there might be among mankind a few prepared to hear.

Buddhist literature glorifies the lotus in many of its passages as symbolic of spirituality. The *Dhammapada* relates: "Like a beautiful flower full of color and full of scent are the well-spoken words of him who acts as he professes to;" and in other verses: "Just as on a heap of rubbish thrown upon the highway grows the lotus sweetly fragrant and delighting the heart. . . ," "Even so among those blinded mortals who are like rubbish, the truly enlightened shines with exceeding glory by his wisdom."

From the purely personal end the Vedic saga finds the Supreme Spirit as the soul of our soul within the body which he speaks of as the nine-petalled 'portalled' lotus: "There is the nine-portalled lotus covered under three bands, in which lives the Spirit with the Atman within that the Veda-knowers know." This passage symbolizes the body and signifies its purity and beauty—"the nine-portalled lotus" being the body with its nine apertures.

The enraptured person, unmindful, unperturbed by the exigencies of the world around him, he who sits in concentration without being distracted by the activities and cravings of the earthly life, is likened in Hindu thought to the lotus leaf that remains unstained by water. It is a classic simile that, just as the leaves of the lotus, which because of their smooth, oily surface are not affected by the water in which they grow and remain, so likewise the man established in the Universal Self, the Spirit of God, the waves of the world in which he dwells do not destroy him.

The saints are sinners who keep on trying. —*Stevenson*

30

"DIVINE ORDER"

Billie Allen

IT WAS ON FRIDAY before Washington's Birthday, and we had driven our Motorhome to the old ghost-town of Tumco, in a canyon of the Cargo Muchacho Mountains, in the Colorado desert.

We had camped, explored, and prospected here for many years, but recently there had been such an influx of campers we had stayed away. Now the long weekend and perfect weather called us. We had returned and were camped at the old mill-site, located on a flat-topped hill overlooking the whole town and incoming road. Except for one van near the crumbled adobe building, we were as yet the only campers.

The day passed swiftly. My husband Alex ran sand through his drywasher, panning the concentrates for small particles of gold. Our two Chinese pugs and I prowled through rubble, walking, watching lizards and ground squirrels, now and then hearing the song of a bird in a stunted Palo Verde tree growing along the dry wash that curved around the east side of the hill. The desert was serene: silent and beautiful, the Carho Muchacho Mountains standing guard along three sides of the old mining camp.

Night came very soon after the sun disappeared behind the mountains, with not even a sliver of moon to light the canyon, just far-off stars to magnify shadows.

We were in bed and asleep early. Shortly after midnight, I was awakened and went to the kitchen for a drink of water. Looking down the canyon, I saw the lights of a car coming. Sitting down on my bunk, I continued watching until the vehicle stopped near the base of the hill and then backed down a bisecting wash. Before the car lights were turned off, someone was out shooting a pistol. I cringed, aware that whoever it was could not know we were camped nearby and that people who shot at midnight probably would not care.

After what seemed to be a shivering eternity, the shooting stopped. Alex and the dogs slept soundly, and I did not waken them for I could visualize Alex sitting up all night with his old deer-rifle. I told myself I would rouse him if anyone started up the hill.

Propping myself up with pillows, I went on watching and listening. Near twelve-thirty, I saw two more vehicles coming in. I breathed a sigh. Now we would not be alone. My relief was shortlived. The two new arrivals stopped at the bottom of the hill and began playing powerful spotlights up and down and over and around our Motorhome and campsite. I was terrified, expecting I knew not what. Something kept me from rousing Alex, who slept on soundly. Silently I prayed, "Wherever we are, God is." I watched without a breath as the vehicles turned and went around the base of the hill and on behind a knoll where I could see only the glow of a lantern and a fire as they set up camp.

Wideawake, I kept vigil. Near two o'clock, another camper came up the canyon, drove about two hundred yards beyond our hill, and stopped--whereupon they too began shooting, and this time with a rifle. I wondered if these were dope-peddlers or drug-addicts or drunks--people who did not care if one or one hundred camps became their targets in the night.

Something still kept me from wakening Alex. Suddenly I found myself praying--not for us, but for these people who sprayed the darkness with bullets, turning peaceful night into terror. Knowing we are all children of God, I began to pray: " 'I behold the Christ in you, I behold the Christ in you, I behold the Christ in you." Then, unbidden, my lips formed the words: "I declare Divine Order in your camp."

Before anything else happened, quiet reigned. No sound broke the stillness of the desert.

I spent the next hour thanking God for hiding us in the shelter of His wing, for giving His angels charge over us, for keeping vigil over a ghost-town.

• • •

I have had more trouble with myself than with any other man.

—Dwight Moody

MEDITATION: SAMUEL

Samuel M. Silver

WHEN did you last scan your Bible?

If you were to take Holy Writ off the shelf, and remove the dust which may have accumulated on its covers, and begin to turn the pages, interesting recollections would probably come to you. . . of your grandparents, or your confirmation, or your wedding. The very act of holding the Bible again in your hands would set up some engrossing memories.

But memories are not enough in life; they must stimulate us to deeds which will register our understanding of our duties as parents, citizens, and just children of God.

As you re-examine Holy Writ, the very names of the books of the Bible might supply you with mental pictures which would color your future conduct. Genesis means "beginning." When was the last time you made a fresh beginning on some worthwhile project? Exodus means "departure." Isn't it time to depart from some bad habit which drags you downward?

And your eye might rest upon two books of the Bible which are named Samuel. There is Samuel I and Samuel II. Who is this person who is honored by having two books named after him? What can he, who lived thousands of years ago, teach us who grapple and grope with today's challenges and problems?

Samuel is sometimes referred to as the last of the Judges and the first of the Prophets. The name Samuel means in Hebrew "Requested of the Lord." His mother, Hannah, had begged God for a son. Samuel was born unto her, and in gratitude she dedicated him to the service of God. And, in accordance with the request of his parents, Samuel spent his entire life ministering unto his people.

Did the people appreciate the services they received from Samuel? Not always. Fortunately, however, Samuel gave of himself not for the sake of thanks or gratitude but exclusively because of his desire to bring nearer to the hearts of his people adherence to the ways of gentleness and peace. Like Abraham Lincoln, Samuel was a man of gentleness who was compelled by the needs of his day to participate in war. But he never stooped to the level of enjoying the strife in which he was forced

to indulge.

Look into your Bible again. Read again the name Samuel. He speaks to us out of those hallowed pages. He says to us: Learn to derive your enjoyment not from the hope of the thanks of those you help, but from the satisfaction you get from the help you have given. In one passage, Samuel urges his people not to submit to a king because a king will bring hardship to them. The people disregarded his words. But Samuel did not hold a grudge against those who flouted his pleas. He continued to serve. Samuel's reward was not in praise, not in material wealth, but in the joy of being a servant of the shining precepts of Almighty God.

• • •

A PRAYER

O LORD
we would share with others
the wishes Thou hast bestowed
so generously upon us.

Lead us, we pray, into the paths
of richly sharing. May the abundance
of our lives in Thee
be named at this Thy altar.

Show us, O Lord, that the sharing
of earthly gifts but enriches
our spiritual life in Thee.

In the measure which we desire
spiritual increase, may we
in just measure give.

— Nixeon Civille Handy

OPEN YOUR EYES AND SEE

Estelle D. Broadrick

STEP BACK and take a good long look at yourself. At what you were, what you wished to be, and what you are. Be as searching---as clear-sighted---as you are in viewing others. Study yourself impersonally, carefully, prayerfully.

Maintain your distance. Look down inside your heart as if you were God. See yourself as you are: not the you you try to impress upon the world, but the you the world never sees.

Look at the things you prize. Look at your pride, your selfishness, your possessiveness, your vanity, your fibs, your narrowness, your hasty judgments, your guilts, your little sins. . . and then pray for forgiveness.

When you are able to see yourself as you really are, clearly and completely, you will be able to improve yourself, to change your ways, lift your thoughts, renew yourself by the transformation of your mind.

Clearly, you need help---and I need help---and that help comes only from God. Turn to Him for complete forgiveness, for enlightenment, for a brighter today and tomorrow.

When you plan a trip, you open a road-map and make an x where you are, trace the route you want to travel, and then mark the place you plan to visit.

Open the Bible and study the Scriptures. Here you will find the road-signs you must follow.

There is no other way for you, no other road-maps, and no short-cuts. Walk therein all the days of your life.

In approximate proportion the world grows smaller and smaller mankind will have to grow bigger and bigger.

—Aarno Davidson

BOOK REVIEW

A PRAYER MANUAL

A review of "You Can Pray As You Ought," by Arnold Prater, with a foreward by Leighton Ford. Paperback, Thomas Nelson Publishers, PO Box 946, Nashville, Tenn. 128 pages. $2.95.

"I can't hear what you are saying," said the father to his daughter as she kneeled at her bedside in prayer.

"I'm not talking to you," snapped the juvenile pray-er.

Whom do we address when we pray?

What is prayer supposed to accomplish?

Are prayers heard?

What is the proper technique for divine supplication?

These questions are answered in vigorous fashion by Reverend Prater, a Methodist minister, in this intriguing book.

How we pray, he contends, is an index of the kind of person we are.

God is not a cosmic bellhop, ready to provide us with instant assent to our petitions.

God doesn't really need our prayers, he asserts. We need prayer to attune ourselves to the wishes of the Almighty.

We need more discussions of this sort. In his preface, Billy Graham's righthand man Leighton Ford testifies that this book can help us.

It can help not because the author unlocks all the mysteries of the deity, but because of the suggestions it contains of how we can buttress our human appartus the better to contend with daily dilemmas.

Even if we are not in the same ecclesiastical camp as Reverend Prater, his ideas are helpful to us. He reminds us, for example, that prayer should be a two-way operation. We should listen as well as speak. Some are more articulate than others, but the length of one's prayer is not as important as its quality. And a spoken prayer should be preceded by a period of silence. We should try to catch the still, small voice before breaking out in our importunings.

I think Martin Buber was somewhat arrogant in defining communi-

cation of this kind between Almighty and man as "I-Thou." Why put the 'I' first? Reverend Prater puts it the other way around: "Thou, O God, speak to me, and then I will endeavor to frame my own thoughts."

Reverend Prater believes in intercessionary prayer, and he cites a number of cases to bolster his view. He believes that, although God has programmed certain events, the deity does take cognizance of the desires of human beings as enunciated in prayers. The author regularly offers pleas to God in behalf of those who need assistance. He also subscribes to the view that God, in His infinite wisdom, will sometimes grant immediate physical relief to one who is suffering, either as a result of the petition of the sufferer or of one who prays in his behalf.

Reverend Prater joins the Psalmist in his conviction that God is especially commiserative towards those who are brokenhearted but contrite. That doesn't mean that God wants us to suffer. It does mean that sorrow sensitizes us so that we are the more able to do God's work here on earth.

There's an old story about an actor and a farmer who took turns reciting the Twenty-third Psalm. The actor's performance was moving, but the farmer's was even more so. Said an observer: "The actor knows the Psalm, but the farmer knows the Shepherd." In his book Reverend Prater urges us to get to know the Shepherd as fully as we can.

-S.M.S.

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A TRYING DAY

Wyn Hope

Dear God, it's been a trying day.
Somehow I find it hard to pray.
It's easy now for me to say,
"What have I done to deserve this?"
The news of someone dear who'd died;
An ardent wish unsatisfied;
A payment I could not provide;
A lost pet cat I sorely miss.
It's easy when life brings one pain
To weep or pout or just complain
Although one's blessings still remain.
Tomorrow things won't seem so grave.
With every heartache and reverse
I've learned that things could be much worse.
And you, dear God, will reimburse
With better days, so I'll be brave.

(Views expressed by contributors do not necessarily represent those of the Fellowship or its Editor.)

GOD'S LIGHTBULB

Liston Pope, Jr.

I' m in God's lightbulb. I' m the first mayfly
To find the passage.
On, off: I worship
The scorching filament, the drunkenness of light
That sends my shrivelled body sprawling
O n heaven' s rim. An incandescent speck
By God' s insignia,
A writhing proof
Of current, offering
To haggard eyes of my ambitious brothers
(Hear them? Tst, tst! Still without,
And ever!) little comfort.
I die for that sweet click, that
On, off: But am I dead?
I hear my spirit still, like motes within
A wispen, sifting shadow;
My spirit is the brooding nymph who sends
Out millions, waits
And *knows* they can' t return!